

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2012

6:00 PM

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Paoletto; Co-chair, Blunt; Co-chair,
Curwen, Bonney, Martinez

NON-COMMITTEE: Council members: Brannelly, Olson

Co-chair Paoletto called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

AGENDA

Approval of Committee Minutes: December 28, 2011

Approval of Committee Minutes: January 3, 2012 (Reconvened
Meeting)

Approval of Public Hearing Minutes: January 3, 2012

Approval of Committee Minutes: January 9, 2012 (Special Meeting)

Approval of Committee Minutes: January 17, 2012 (Reconvened
Meeting)

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES WITH
THE CORRECTIONS TO THE JANUARY 9, 2012 MINUTES:**

Corrections:

Page 4; bottom of the page **should read:**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING
PRIOR TO THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON JANUARY 17, 2012**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER M. McCARTHY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Page 5; where it reads; Council member Martinez moved to recess the meeting for January 17, 2012 at 5:30 pm **should read:**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO RECESS THE MEETING FOR JANUARY 17, 2012 AT 5:30 PM FOR ITEM #31-11 RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION FOR THE CITY OF BRIDGEPORT**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER M. McCARTHY SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

22-11 Proposed Resolution to review procedures for Council Members' Expense Reimbursement (Stipends).

Co-chair Paoletto stated that there was a request to table this item.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN MOVED TO TABLE**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

51-11 Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 12.32 Historic Districts, amend to add new Section 12.32.070 Civkin Historic District.

Co-chair Paoletto stated that Council member Olson was the maker of the resolution for this item.

Council member Olson gave some background about this item. He relayed that he helped establish the Stratfield Historic District Commission area. He said he lived in this district and he believed that the commission has been beneficial to the neighborhood. He noted that the second historic district is centered in Black Rock, but there aren't any district boundaries. He explained that this proposal was unique for a property located at 93 Mayflower Drive (*he noted that the owner was present with Mark Halsted, who is an architect*). He went on to say that Mr. Halsted has been working with the owner who is aware of the architectural value of the property. He mentioned that Mr. Civkin is a well renowned architect that has designed many houses throughout the country. The owner of the property, Mrs. Lachance has requested that her house be made part of an historic district. He further spoke about the study that will be conducted and he said a will need to be appointed. The entire package proposal will then be referred to the State Historic District Commission and if it's found that the property is worthy; the matter will then come back to the committee and then on to the full city council.

Mrs. Lachance stated that the house was very unique in its placement on the land. And the outside of the house is so different from the street, because the house is on an angle with no view of the back of the house that she felt had tremendous value. She further relayed that her family has tried to maintain Mr. Civkin's wish of what the home should look like, by implementing continuations of this idea.

Mr. Halsted stated that he resided in Fairfield. He said this was the first house that he found of Victor Civkin's. He offered a brief history that Mr. Civkin is nationally known and he has designed houses all over the country – *he distributed some information related to the process they will need to go through to establish an historic district*. He said the government needs to form a study committee and put together a report within a month. And then they will turn it back over to Bridgeport. According to William Minor, LUCR; he said they may have to go before the Planning & Zoning Commission and the city council for final ratification. However, he noted that the ordinance could be passed based on meeting the conditions that were outlined in the information.

Mr. Halsted continued to speak about the merits of the house. He stated that in his opinion, Mrs. Lachance's home is one of the nicest on Brooklawn Avenue. He commented that modern historic architecture has come of age. He stated that the Ordinance Committee could act as the study committee, or they have the option to add their recommendations to the study. He recalled that the matter was brought forward during 2010; however, nothing was done to create the new historic district. He said Mrs. Lachance currently resides at 3030 Park Avenue and she doesn't want to put her house on the market until she knows it will be properly preserved.

Council member Martinez asked if anyone ever petitioned before to have their house put in an historic district. Co-chair Paoletto responded that during his twelve years serving on the city council, he has never experienced a request to do this and he didn't recall the city council ever looking at such a proposal in the past.

Council member Martinez stated that her concern was that others will start looking to do the same thing in the future. Co-chair Paoletto commented that it's not an easy process and there are a lot of criteria to consider. He noted that Council member Olson wouldn't have brought the item forward if he didn't think it was a viable proposal. He agreed that they didn't want to start seeing requests of this type on a regular basis.

Mr. Halsted said the process is meant to be restrictive. He stated that he was trying to do it for his neighborhood also, but many residents are against it because they don't realize that it will add value to their property as a benefit. He said the state has visited the house already and they seemed interested in the proposal, because they would like to see more houses preserved.

Council member Curwen asked if there was an ordinance on the books to review what it reads on the subject. Council member Olson said the Stratfield Historic Commission outlines the boundary areas that were created in the past.

Council member Curwen noted that the house isn't really that old. He questioned whether or not it was practical to deem the property historical. Mr. Halsted said the request would be a voluntary process. He relayed that there needs to be a vote taken and 60% of the property owners have to ratify it. Council member Curwen stated that he thought that would only apply if they were looking to create a Civkin designed district. He stressed his concern of other surrounding properties being restricted by the proposed ordinance. Mr. Halsted disagreed that would be the case, because the properties would be bounded.

Council member Curwen made the point that there could be a large disparity from one home to the next; in terms of the resell value if the historic district was created. Mr. Halsted responded that if one property is worth more in the area, then it will bring up the value of another property.

Co-chair Blunt asked for clarification whether there were already two historic districts established and if they were asking to create an entirely new district. Mr. Halsted replied no, they will just tag onto the current Stratfield Historic District.

Co-chair Blunt asked if there were any prerequisites required to qualify for the creation of an historic district. Mr. Halsted said the house has to be fifty years old and there are other relevant factors to consider; such as the condition and the period and style of the home.

Co-chair Paoletto commented that currently, if Mrs. Lachance or a new buyer wants to paint their house, they have to go before the designated historic district commission for approval. Council member Olson clarified that the Stratfield Historic District Commission doesn't dictate colors.

Council member Curwen stated that although Mrs. Lachance is looking to preserve the house; she's also selling it, which will tie the new homeowner to the rules of the historic district.

Council member Bonney asked if areas designated as an historic district were designated officially by the state. Council member Olson said a historic district is created by a 60% vote of the property owners in the area.

Co-chair Paoletto stated that if the committee voted to approve the ordinance and the state denied it, then the proposal will become a moot point.

It was noted that there currently is an ordinance on the books that allows for the creation of a district, so the ordinance is in place; this ordinance will be added to that ordinance.

Council member Bonney said it was his mindset that the ordinance was put into place after the state historic commission deemed it an historic area and then it encompassed the district as such. Mr. Halsted said the enabling ordinance was already there and it allows for adding additional historic districts in the future.

Council member Bonney asked if a report was available from the stated indication that they are in favor of creating the historic district. Mr. Halsted said no.

Council member Curwen asked if they had a legal opinion from the city attorney yet. City Attorney Anastasi replied no. He stated that public hearing will be required and if the item is approved, it should be done subject to holding a public hearing.

Attorney Anastasi asked if the property was contiguous to the existing historic building. Mr. Halsted said no. Attorney Anastasi said a district is generally looked at as being something more than just **one house**. He further stated that they don't want to encourage spot zoning. He said if the request is permitted, at this time he didn't see it as a legal issue, but that needs to be determined.

Council member Martinez said she would like to support the request; however, she said she was glad that Attorney Anastasi mentioned the potential legality. She agreed that the matter should be tabled.

Co-chair clarified that the committee would table the item for the purpose of obtaining a legal opinion from the city attorney's office.

Co-chair Blunt asked if the study committee would be the Ordinance Committee's charge. Co-chair Paoletto said that would need to be determined.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BONNEY MOVED TO TABLE ITEM 51-11 FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBTAINING A LEGAL OPINION FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

City Attorney Anastasi stated that even if there aren't any legal implications; the committee and the entire city council will need to consider what they chose to do.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CURWEN SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN
** COUNCIL MEMBER BONNEY SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services